DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 227 874 IR 050 195

TITLE Library Theory and Research Section. Round Table on Library History. Education and Research Division. Papers.

INSTITUTION International Federation of Library Associations, The Hague (Netherlands).

PUB DATE Aug 82

NOTE 53p.; Papers presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations (48th, Montreal, Canada, August 22-28, 1982). Humphreys paper will not reproduce.

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Archives; *Books; Foreign Countries; *History; Information Storage; *International Organizations; Library Administration; Library Associations; *Library Research; *Library Science; *Recordkeeping; Western Civilization

IDENTIFIERS Library Administrative Records; Records Management; United Kingdom; USSR

ABSTRACT

Papers on theory and research in library history presented at the 1982 International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) conference include: (1) "The Future of the Library's Past: Library Administrative Records Preservation, Policy and Practice," a discussion by Paul Sturges (United Kingdom) of the need for library records preservation, current record preservation practices in British public libraries, the establishment of records policies and library archives, and the problem of preserving machine-readable records; (2) "Scientific Research in the History of Librarianship in the USSR," a description by K. I. Abramov (USSR) of the organization, major trends, and results of scientific research in the history of Soviet librarianship, with information on the study of Lenin's plans for library services and the preparation of specific monographs, collections of articles, and bibliographic indexes on the history of librarianship; (3) "The Book and the Library in Society: Methodology and Readership Studies in the Context of Library History," a discussion by K. W. Humphreys (United Kingdom) of the methodology and problems of studying the availability and the use of books in the history of Western civilization and the effect of their use on society. (ESR)

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22-28 août 1982
Fédération internationale des associations
de bibliothécaires et des bibliothèques

networks
48th IFLA General Conference – Montréal
August 22-28, 1982
International Federation of Library
Associations and Institutions

1982

IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE, MONTREAL 1982

Division: Education and Research

Section: RT on Library History

11/L10H1/1-E
172-RE

# The future of the Library's past: Library administrative Records Preservation, Policy and Practice

by

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Meeting
SI yes/no

IR0570195



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# THE FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY'S PAST: LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS PRESERVATION, POLICY AND PRACTICE

## 1. The Case for Records Preservation

There are at least two good reasons why the administrative records[1] of libraries should be carefully cared for. The first reason is that the work of the library is an important part of social, cultural and educational history. Just as the history of schools, theatres, research institutes, or industrial firms needs to be researched and understood, so does the history of libraries. For library history to be written, good records of the administration of libraries must be preserved. The second reason is that records can still retain vital practical importance for a library long after these records have been created. To library historians the first reason needs little re-statement. The second reason is worth discussing further.

In any organisation it is expected that current documents(correspondence files, memoranda, ledgers, etc), will be kept in good order for immediate use. This is also true of libraries. When those records lose their immediate usefulness, then it may sometimes seem that for practical purposes it does not matter whether they are preserved or not, nor does it matter if anything that is kept, is kept in good order.

However, it is quite easy to find examples of the practical need for retaining older documents and keeping them well-organised. This is particularly true of records relating to the gift, loan or deposit of books or manuscripts in a library.

One particularly striking case will illustrate this point[2]. Lincolnshire County Library, U.K., is responsible for the Tennyson Research Centre which contains manuscripts, books, and other memorabilia relating to Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), the favourite poet of Queen Victoria. Most of this material, which is probably one of the best collections devoted to a single poet anywhere in the world, was received from the Tennyson family in the early 1960s. In 1980 the Tennyson Trust, the family's financial representatives, requested the return of certain of the most valuable manuscripts, so that they could be sold. These manuscripts included that of *In Memoriam* (1850) which had an estimated value of £100,000. The Lincolnshire Library believed that the manuscripts had been permanently given to the Library, but the Tennyson Trust said they were merely on loan. The records of Lincoln City Library, its council committee, the council archives and the files of the city's legal department were all searched for the records of the transfer of the manuscripts from the Tennyson Trust to the Library. The transfer documents were never found,

and eventually the manuscripts were handed over to the Trust and put up for public auction. Lincolnshire County Library then bought the manuscript of *In Memoriam* and other important items for a total cost approaching £150,000. Ineffective records preservation seems likely to have been directly responsible for this expense.

## 2. Legislation or Traditional Practice?

If the importance of library administrative records preservation is recognised, then the question of how such preservation is to be ensured can be asked. Laws or official regulations relating to archives may seem an effective answer. Jørgen Svane-Mikkelsen examined this approach in 1979[3]. He found that even in Denmark, a country with unusually detailed and comprehensive archive legislation, the records of many types of libraries were not provided for. For the libraries of local government, private libraries, library institutions and associations in Denmark, "the preservation of the records is dependent upon the initiative, energy and sometimes luck of the state archives and local archives (local history collections), as well as on the interest, veneration, and feeling of responsibility of the private institutions themselves."[4] Svane-Mikkelsen makes it clear that the survival of useful bodies of library administrative records is due very much to chance. A survey of British public

libraries carried out in the winter of 1979-80 provided much more evidence[5].

There is clearly no accepted set of practices or traditions of record preservation operating in British public libraries. Some significant details from the survey will illustrate this. In Britain the whole country is covered by a system of public libraries, each of which is attached to a local government administrative unit, such as a county or metropolitan borough council. There is also a system of local record offices whose responsibilities include the records of local government departments and services such as public libraries. Whilst it is not mandatory for these record offices to hold the records of the library systems, such an arrangement is at least a logical and appropriate one. However, only 48% of the libraries had placed any of their records in the care of the local record office. The quantity of the library's records held in the record office might also be comparatively small. The libraries with definite records policies almost invariably transferred records to the record office. Others followed a variety of practices.

Another indicator of the lack of positive policies was the fact that only 51% of libraries had someone formally designated as responsible for records. Furthermore,

the person designated varied greatly from one library to another. It was often someone quite senior, such as assistant chief librarian or head of administrative services. In some cases, however, it was someone in a very junior post, such as the chief librarian's secretary, the filing clerk or the chief typist.

There was also a lack of consensus on which categories of documents should be retained as archives, at what date records should be examined for decisions on destruction or retention, and the ways in which records should be listed and indexed. The category of documents most universally retained by libraries when current use was over, was the minutes of meetings of the local authority committee or sub-committee responsible for libraries. For other categories such as correspondence, internal reports, staff records, loan records, donations registers, etc, there were as many different policies as there were libraries. Only 33% of libraries had made a decision on the period after which records were no longer considered current and might be examined for possible destruction. The period they adopted varied greatly too, stretching from one to ten years. Listing and indexing systems varied from simple subject indexes leading to the locations at which relevant files might be found, at one extreme, to a complex faceted scheme based on the ideas of Ranganathan, at the other extreme. The records retained by libraries varied greatly in

their quantity, from a few important documents to fully representative archives. Accessibility to potential users also varied very noticeably from one library to another.

## 3. A Records Policy

Large numbers of British public libraries clearly need to establish some type of records policy and introduce systematic records preservation practice. There is good reason to believe that other types of library in Britain and libraries in other parts of the world have the same need. What form then should a records policy take?

The archives profession should be looked to for guidance on this. The care of traditional archives material is still the part of archives work most favoured within the profession, but modern records management is becoming more fashionable. The basic principles of modern records management were laid down in various writings by T. R. Schellenberg, and most of what he said holds good[6]. However, the discipline has developed and more recent books adapt the basic principles of records management to particular circumstances with good effect. For instance works of Michael Cook, archivist of Liverpool University, U.K., contain much that is appropriate to library records management[7].

Modern records management is essentially concerned with the process whereby records become archives. Not all records can be retained: their bulk swiftly becomes excessive. The archive must contain only that which is vital, practically or historically. The administration of the process of appraising material for retention or destruction is crucial to the making of an effective archive. It can be done by an appropriately trained and briefed member of the staff of the institution concerned. It can also be delegated by the record-producing institution to a record office which is separate from that institution. For instance a local public library can make an arrangement with the local record office; a government library with the national archives; a university library with the university record office. This may mean, either accepting the procedures already laid down by that record office, or negotiating a special arrangement. Certainly in the case of a national archive, there are likely to be very definite procedures laid down, as in the U.K. by the Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967 for instance. Other types of record office may be more flexible.

The record office will be able to advise or direct on current record keeping, with a view to easing the transfer of records to archive status. It will also be able to guide in the selection of an interval after which records will be withdrawn from current files.

It may be, for instance, that withdrawal will occur for different classes of record after different intervals.

Whether decisions over the archiving of records are delegated to a record office or kept within the organisation, the designation of a responsible officer is essential. This officer can either liaise with the record office and organise the transfer of material to the office, or he can handle the whole procedure himself internally. If the latter alternative is chosen, then it is vital that the responsible officer is able to make impartial and professional judgements on the fate of documents. It is quite likely that up to 90% of the records produced by a library will be destroyed as a result of the appraisal process. With such a scale of destruction it is important that decisions over what is to be retained as archives are the best possible. As regards the practical usefulness of archives, the Tennyson example discussed earlier indicates the importance of retaining documentation relating to the provenance and ownership of materials held by the library. Other types of material may have equal importance. Decisions over what should be retained for historical purposes are more difficult.

Some work on this question has been done by Denis F. Keeling of the Library History Group of the Library

Association in the U.K.[8]. He examined the types of information likely to be required by the prospective historian of a library and compared the resulting list with a second list of the types of information about libraries already available in published or semi-published sources. Such sources are mainly annuals which present the collated returns from individual library authorities. His chosen example was that of a London public library, and it may be that London public libraries are unusually well covered by this type of source[9]. He defined five main categories of information relating to a library, likely to be required by the historian. These were - general organisation, service points, library materials, staff, library services and use. He discovered that published sources covered many aspects of information on service points, almost all types of information on library materials and several aspects of library services and use. The implication for the archivist or library records officer would seem to be that preservation of records on general organisation and staff (that is, staffing structures, organisational charts, job descriptions, re-evaluation records, etc., rather than files on individual staff members) might represent high priorities, since they were least covered by published sources. Similar analytical procedures could be applied to other types of library and would contribute to the formation of a records policy for an individual library.

4. Machine-readable Records

Possibly the most difficult problems in the records of a modern library are presented by the use of computers in library administration. So much work which previously produced paper records now produces machine-readable records, most frequently magnetic tapes. The archiving of machine-readable records turns the usual problems of modern records management on their heads. Paper records accumulate unless someone decides that some of them will be destroyed: machine-readable records deteriorate swiftly and irremediably unless someone decides that they will be preserved. Management of paper records reduces the long-term problems: management of machine-readable records increases the problems.

A library may wish to retain records, for example of loan transactions that have been conducted with the assistance of a computer issue system. To do this for a period of more than a few years it must either translate the data into some other form such as paper print-out or COM (Computer Output Microform). This process changes the form of the information. It also destroys the ability to manipulate the data and obtain the answers to questions about the use of the library's collections which make computer issue information so valuable. Loughborough University Library, which has archive tapes of computer issue information going back

to the early 1970s, has used these as an aid to the making of management decisions about collection-building and organisation. It has also made them available for research conducted by students in the University's Department of Library and Information Studies. At present the data is transferred to archive tapes at the end of each year and then the tapes remain untouched, unless required for management or research purposes. There is a constant risk that earlier tapes may have deteriorated and in consequence contain corrupted data. Only a regular programme of 'refreshment' of the tapes could remove this fear. This process would involve time and expense which the library is at present unable to contemplate. The problem is one shared by an ever-increasing number of libraries as they adopt mechanisation programmes.

5. The Library Archive

Once the library archive has been created, particularly if it is held by the library itself, rather than by a record office on the library's behalf, some other questions are raised. The first of these concerns storage. Libraries which retain their own archive often have a tendency to allow material to moulder in any obscure corner or cupboard that is available. If material has deliberately been selected for preservation, then it needs better treatment than this. Neither the types of filing cabinet used for current records, or

the varieties of book shelving available in most libraries, are necessarily suitable for archives. The stack areas used for little-used books may also not be appropriate for archive storage. The treatment of archives by a library should approximate as closely to the treatment the same archives would receive in a record office. This means the use of acid-free boxes, shelving which allows the maximum circulation of air around the documents and an environment as far as possible protected from natural light, extremes of temperature and humidity, pests and other hazards such as chemicals or fire. Published standards are provided by national archives bodies in many countries.

Listing and indexing of archives may also require different techniques and standards from those established in librarianship. The list is a document which explains the content of a group of archives, item by item in an order related to their original purposes and forms. Wherever possible archivists accompany it with an index. Archives cannot usefully be catalogued and classified like books and pamphlets. The detail and elaboration of lists and indexes will of course vary according to the resources available, but at the least a summary list should be attempted.

Access to archives is the last main consideration. By and large, librarians bring an open attitude to making

all kinds of material available for public use. This usually applies to documents relating to their own history too. However, there are sensitive categories of material, particularly those relating to staff matters. Libraries are likely to want staff records to be closed to researchers entirely or partially for much longer periods of time than other types of archive. This is quite natural. When to open archives for research, and whether or not to open all materials of the same age after the same interval, are decisions which have to be made as part of the normal business of archive administration. Such decisions are, however, the final ingredient in a full records policy.

Nothing suggested in this paper will make libraries different from other institutions, but rather is something that will bring them into line with best practice in government departments, business corporations and many other kinds of institution. Library history is a young discipline and much that has been written to date is superficial and unanalytical. The discipline has two main needs: one concerns the clarification of aims and the improvement of methodology; the other concerns the availability of sources. The records policies advocated in this paper would go a long way towards meeting the second of these needs, and give the library's past a secure future.

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Notes

1. In this paper the term 'record' will usually be used to signify material held in current files, and 'archive' for material held in historical files. For various reasons, however, it is not always possible to retain a fine distinction in the use of these words.

2. Information taken from the *Guardian* 18.7.1980.

3. Jørgen Svane-Mikkelsen, *Archive legislation and library history. A report on archive legislation in relation to library administrative archives.* Paper presented at the 45th IFLA Congress, Copenhagen, 1979. Ref 61/EDU/2E.

4. Svane-Mikkelsen op cit pp 11-12.

5. A brief version of the findings appeared as R.P. Sturges 'Do librarians care for their past?' *Library Association Record* 82, 7 (July 1980) 317-8, and a fuller version was included in R.P. Sturges 'British library history: progress and prospects' *Journal of Library History* 16, 2 (Spring 1981) 365-379.

6. See particularly T.R. Schellenberg *Modern Archives, Principles and Techniques* (1956, Chicago 1971).

7. Michael Cook *Archives Administration: A Manual for Intermediate and Smaller Organizations and for Local Government* (Folkestone, Kent, U.K., 1977) and *Archives and the Computer* (London, 1980).

8. Unpublished communication to the author, dated 14.9.1981.

9. Relevant sources for London Public Libraries are:-

*Directory of London Public Libraries*, edited by Lawrence H. Cudby. 7th edition. (London, Association of London Chief Librarians, 1982).

*Public Library Statistics: 1980-81 Actuals.* (London, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 1982). Annual.

*Public Library Statistics: 1981-82 Estimates.* (London, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 1981). Annual.

*London Public Library Statistics: year ended 31 March 1980.* (London, Association of London Chief Librarians, 1980). Annual. Limited circulation.

*Library Charges: 1981-82.* (London, Association of London Chief Librarians, 1981). Annual. Limited circulation.

*London Borough Library Services. Audio charges as at 1 April 1982.* Compiled by Bromley Music and Audio Librarian. (London Borough of Bromley Public Libraries, 1982). Annual. Limited circulation.

London and South Eastern Library Region. (LASER). *List of Members and Annual Report, 1979-1980.* (London, LASER, 1980).

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48th IFLA Session, Montreal, August 1982

Division of education and research

Section of library theory and research

Round table on library history

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# SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE USSR

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Moscow, 1982

# Scientific research in the history of librarianshi in the USSR

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History of librarianship, as a component of history of culture, represents one of the major problems investigated by historical science and librarianship. Impressive scientific research in this field is being accomplished in the USSR.

The aim of this report is to describe the principles of organization, the main trends and results of this work.

## Organization of scientific research in the history of librarianship

Incessantly developing, society is wont to pay more and more attention to different aspects of research into the history of its intellectual life and culture. Life, among other things, imposes upon historians the task of studying all aspects of historical development of the history of librarianship, the generalization of the experience of library development with the aim of solving those problems with which libraries are faced today. The in=depth and many=sided study of the experience of Soviet librarianship is one of the major components of long=term planning and forecasting of the development of the Soviet library system on a sound scientific basis. These processes are interconnected due to which the development of research in the history of librarianship and its results have a certain impact

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upon the further improvement of work connected with long=term planning and prognostication of librarianship. At the same time, the latter endeavour stimulates the activization of research in the field of history of librarianship in the USSR.

In this field permanent attention is focused on R and D. Thus paragraphs, concerning the history of librarianship in the USSR as a whole, in the Union republics and appropriate regions of our country, are every five=year=plan period included into the coordinated plans of research in the field of librarianship, bibliographic science and bibliology. An important role in the coordination of R and D in the history of librarianship is played by the Committee on General Theoretical Problems and History of Librarianship created within the Interdepartmental Library Council of the USSR Ministry of Culture.

The intensification of research in the history of librarianship called for the improvement of the organization of this activity. In this connection scientific sectors and groups, conducting research in the history of librarianship, were created in the V.I.Lenin State Library of the USSR, the Saltykov=Shchedrin Public Library and the State Public Research and Technical Library of the Siberian Branch of USSR Academy of Sciences. Attention to this scientific discipline of librarianship is also given by scientific workers and teachers of higher educational institutions of the country.

The V.I.Lenin State Library, as the leading national research agency in the field of librarianship, performs the duties of an organizing, coordinating and methodological centre. The Lenin Library conducts this work in close cooperation with the Moscow Institute of Culture, the Department of Librarianship

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of which prepares text=books, manuals, methodological guides and monographs on the history of librarianship. Much attention is given to dissertation research on the subject, particularly to the study of republican and regional aspects of the problem. Only in the 70s over 20 theses on the history of librarianship in Byelorussia, Kirgizia, Moldavia, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, the Ukraine and other Union republics were defended at the Department of Librarianship of the Moscow State University of Culture.

Main trends and results of research in the history of librarianship

The main trends of R and D in the field are the following:

- the creation of a sources base
- the preparation of monographic studies, scientific works and publications dealing with general and particular aspects of the history of librarianship

The study of different aspects of the history of librarianship in the Soviet period represents the main purpose of scientific research in this field of science and it is to the solution of this problem that all efforts of historians of library science are directed. Questions of history of librarianship in our country in the period preceding the Great October Socialist Revolution have been examined closely enough. Work in this direction is being continued yet today the main problem is the study and comprehension of the experience of library development, which has accumulated in the last 65 years.

Historians in the field of librarianship focus their attention on the study of Lenin's heritage in librarianship, a study which was initiated by N.K.Krupskaya. Lenin's concepts

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in the field of creation and development of librarianship in a socialist State also attract the attention of specialists in many foreign countries. In our country work connected with the preparation and publication of thematic collections of articles written by V.I.Lenin in this field is being carried out on a regular basis. These thematic collections include: "V.I.Lenin i bibliotechnoye delo". 2nd edition, published by "Kniga" in 1977 and previous editions. At present the third added edition of this collection is being prepared and work on a collection of V.I.Lenin's articles dealing with librarianship translated into English is in progress. These works will make it possible for both the Soviet and foreigner reader to more fully comprehend V.I.Lenin's concepts and plans for the organization of the Soviet socialist system of library service of the population.

N.K.Krupskaya's contribution in this field is also a subject of study. Up to now over 10 documentary publications devoted to N.K.Krupskaya's activity in the field of librarianship have been put out. Nevertheless, her creative work is continually being studied and currently a full collection of her works in 5 volumes entitled "N.K.Krupskaya. O bibliotechnom dele" is being prepared. These volumes will include many archival materials and works, published in the 20s and 30s, which have now become bibliographical rarities. Vol.1 (published in 1982) contains over 130 materials pertaining to 1917-1924. All in all, the aforementioned collection will cover 700 articles, works and documents, including more than a hundred items, which have not been published before.

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The preparation and publication of collections of documents and works by V.I.Lenin and N.K.Krupskaya, and collections of documents of the Soviet government and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the field of librarianship represent a major contribution into the creation of the sources base of R and D in the history of librarianship in the USSR. At the same time it is an indispensable condition for the consolidation of methodology of library science.

Work, involving the creation of a complex of publications, the components of which are identified with the collections of documents and information and bibliographical publications on the history of librarianship in the country as a whole and in the appropriate Union republics, is now under way. This work is being accomplished by the V.I.Lenin State Library in close cooperation with State archives, institutions of higher learning, State libraries of the Union republics and other cultural agencies. In the course of this activity over 10 collections of articles and the same number of bibliographical indexes have been prepared. Over 10 collections have been compiled in the Union republics. All these publications have broadened our notions on the regularities, trends, specific features and various aspects of library development in our country.

The bibliographical indexes cover over 3.5 mill. monographs, works, collections, journals, newspapers and other materials on the history of librarianship in our country in the period from 1917 to 1929. This work is being continued. The aforementioned publications provide researchers with a sufficiently full complex of sources dealing with the history of librarianship. This has in recent years brought about an increase in the

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activity of researchers, the broadening and actualization of the topical content of R and D and dissertation research in the field. This base of sources in widely used in the preparation of monographic studies and such scientific works as, for example, "Istoriya bibliotechnigo dela v SSSR: Uchebnik. 3-e izd." ("History of librarianship in the USSR: Text=book. 3rd ed." Moscow, Kniga, 1980. Author: Abramov K.I.)+. The afore=mentioned works are quite widely used in the teaching process in the higher educational institutions of the country, in the planning and development of methodology of the teaching process, directed towards the training of highly qualified library personnel and specialists in library science.

Among monographs published in recent years the following deserve special mention: Abramov K.I. Bibliotechnoye stroitel'stvo v pervye gody Sovetskoi vlasti 1917-1920. (Library development in the first years of Soviet rule. 1917-1920). M., 1974; Kartashov N.S. Vzaimodeistviye nauchnykh bibliotek RSFSR. 1917-1967 (Cooperation of research libraries in the RSFSR. 1917-1967) Novosibirsk, 1975; Vaneyev A.N. Razvitiye bibliotechnoy mysli v SSSR (Development of library thought in the USSR). M., 1980; Bibliotekovedcheskiye issledovaniya; metodologiya i metodika (Research in librarianship: methodology and methods). M., 1978; Lupashko I.E. Bibliotechnoye stroitel'stvo v Moldaviyi (Library development in Moldavia). Kishinev, 1978 and other works.

Attention is also given to the creation of the multi=volume history of librarianship in the USSR in 1917-1977. It is being

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+ Kasymova A.G. Istoriya bibliotechnogo dela v Uzbekistane. Tashkent, 1977; Karatygina T.F. Istoriya tekhnicheskih bibliotek v SSSR. M., 1981 and other works.

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prepared by a joint team of specialists of the V.I.Lenin State Library and the Moscow Institute of Culture. A report dealing with the preparation of this multi=volume work was given in a paper entitled "Methodological problems of scientific research in the history of librarianship in the USSR", which K.I. Abramov delivered at the session of this committee in Brussels in 1977.

Since 1975 the V.I.Lenin State Library regularly publishes collections of scientific works under the general title "Istoriya bibliotechnogo dela v SSSR" ("History of librarianship in the USSR"). Issues 1, 2 and 3 of the collection include articles on the theoretical and methodological aspects of librarianship and its developments in the first years of Soviet rule (1921-1929), studies of sources on the history of librarianship (1917-1941). Issue 4 is devoted to the theme "N.K.Krupskaya and current problems of library development in the USSR". Work on the collections is being continued.

Today, in the year in which the 60th anniversary of establishment of the USSR is being marked, the contribution of scientific workers of our Soviet multi=national State into the R and D in field of history of librarianship in the USSR should be mentioned. The V.I.Lenin State Library renders methodological assistance in the organization of research in the field in the Union republics. There are many specialists in the republics who have devoted themselves to the research of history of librarianship in the USSR as a whole and the study of specific national trends of its development in the appropriate regions. In this report a sufficient number of examples were cited.

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Achievements in the hidstory of librarianship of all peoples of our country, gained with the help of the Russian language, the language of communication between the peoples of the USSR, enrich the library experience of the appropriate republics thus becoming a common intellectual property that serves the further development of Soviet library theory and practice.

Scientific research in the history of librarianship in the USSR continues to improve and develop. We have yet to do much in the way of improving its planning and coordination, the speeding up of preparation of monographic studies. The efficiency of historic library research will foremostly depend on the activity of All=Union research centres, research teams in the Union republics and the correct placing of scientific personnel. Research will only then be truly successful when all librarians, who solve the main problems of current library development in their practical everyday work, will widely participate in it. The results of research will be identified with a certain contribution into the further improvement of long=term planning and forecasting of library development, the use of methodological experience in the solution of problems with which current librarianship is faced.

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# The Book and the Library in Society: Methodology and Readership Studies in the Context of Library History

by

K.W.HUMPHREYS (United Kingdom)

Meeting 172.

This paper was originally prepared for a Seminar on the Book and Library in Society held in Warsaw organized by the Section on Theory and Research. Unfortunately I was unable to be there so the paper was not presented. It is offered now to the Round Table as a basis for discussion on some problems of library history.

I have attempted to indicate some of the problems relating to research in this field with illustrations from a number of periods in the history of Western civilisation. These may appear to be random, as a full account of the developments in the relationship between books and libraries and society would be impossible in a short paper of this kind. My personal interest is in the dissemination of texts in the middle ages but although some examples are given for this early period I have by no means concentrated on it. I hope to show that the problems which arise at any point in history involve the same or similar methodologies.

Our questions are what books were available and where, who read them, what evidence is there that they were used and finally what effect did this use have on society (if any). Alternatively we could ask what elements in society affected the supply of certain books and certain types of books. Similarly we could ask where were these libraries, for whom were they organized, what did they contain and what evidence is there of their use. Again alternatively we should wish to know what pressures in society resulted in the supply of libraries, for what purposes and has or had the use of them fulfilled the proclaimed aims.

In this essay I shall consider the first set of questions but it is not of course my purpose here to find solutions to such questions but rather to study the methodology and the problems which arise in attempting to formulate correct answers to them.

far as our evidence will allow. Let us therefore begin by examining the sources which will be the basis for research. These include such documents as catalogues or inventories of libraries made at a particular period; the stated aims of the society or organisation which founded the libraries as these will indicate their expected contents; borrowers' registers and wills which record the private collection of an individual and may also refer to a library as a legatee. In addition there is the correspondence of writers expressing thanks for or requesting the loan of a book; references in novels, diaries, autobiographies, etc to libraries used or remembered; the quotations in creative writing of all kinds from other authors; although they are not in themselves evidence for libraries they may have had an influence on book-collections; and the descriptions by scholars or librarians visiting libraries for a specific purpose. We also have lists of books recommended for reading.

The books themselves of course give an indication of their origins. The first is an ex-libris inscription or label giving the name of the owner and with this may be associated the press-mark (i.e. the letters and/or number for the shelf on which the book was kept), or even an accession number. The binding can also have features which relate it to a particular person, library or workshop. Marginalia or scribbles and pen-trials may be used to identify a former owner. Finally, in the case of manuscripts the character of the script or illumination, obits and liturgical inclusions or exclusions can be sufficient to place and perhaps date the origin of the book(1).

I have indicated some of the factors in the methodology of library history but I shall not attempt to consider the problems which arise from evidence from the individual book. The question of script, illumination and other aspects of the 'archaeology' of

the book would require a series of papers on palaeography and codicology. Every additional piece of research in these fields builds up eventually to an outline of the contents of a library, the output of a scriptorium or the dissemination of a text, all of which are important contributions to the history of cultural activities, reflecting the interests of society at a particular period.

I shall start with libraries of a public nature, then deal with private libraries belonging to individuals and finally the use made of them, with examples from different periods in European and especially British history.

The earliest lists of books which have survived are those of monasteries of the Benedictine order. The information given about each volume is very small. This poses a problem for identifying the works intended since frequently only the author is mentioned. Further only one entry is usually recorded for each volume and since medieval manuscript volumes very often contain several works by different authors only a portion of the works available is mentioned. The result is that such lists offer only a rough impression of the contents of the library. It must however be emphasized that however inadequate such records may be they are very important for assessing the cultural interests of the Order at different periods. You will not need to be reminded that in the period before the eleventh century the Benedictine monasteries were almost the only centres of intellectual activity. In the 48th Chapter of his Rule[2] St. Benedict required his monks to read as part of their daily round. This resulted in the fact that each monastery would have a scriptorium where the copying of books took place. The type of script used and the methods adopted for the preparation of the book for the scribe can in some cases be sufficiently different from other monastic

houses to identify a book as having been written in one monastery(3). The evidence therefore from catalogues and surviving manuscripts which can be attributed to a scriptorium of a particular religious house constitutes the basis for tracing the movement of ideas within this restricted circle. The only other centres were the courts of Kings. The library of Charlemagne for example was fundamental to the educational renaissance for which he was responsible and Professor Bischoff has been able to produce a partial reconstruction of it from a variety of pieces of evidence(4).

The problems of identifying the full contents of a library can be seen in two catalogues from Reichenau. The first (821-822) is of a high level by contemporary standards as it sets out the names of authors followed by their works. Yet each item refers generally to the first work in the volume(5). Some idea of the discrepancy between the number of volumes listed in a catalogue at this date - and indeed for several centuries - and the number of individual works actually represented can be seen in the list of books written for Reginbert at Reichenau between 835 and 842. There are 42 volumes but some have as many as 20 different works in them. This list is imperfect as is the catalogue of 821-822. The problem of imperfections in the manuscript which has survived can lead to misrepresentation as it would appear that some subjects are not present in the library at this date. However a comparison of those catalogues which have survived from the same type of institution, e.g. Benedictine abbeys of the 12th century, will build up a composite picture of the cultural interests of the body concerned. This is not to say that the presence of a book in a library is any indication that it was read but we shall come to this question later.

Certainly the catalogues, lists or inventories of books in

libraries in the middle ages are a valuable touchstone for assessing the intellectual activities of a period. The titles of works for example in the catalogues of the mendicant Orders[6] with whose libraries I have been particularly concerned[7] give an impression of working collections rather than museums of the book. They were formed for the express purpose of supporting teaching and preaching and rarely have extraneous material. The Latin classical authors are not present and such subjects as medicine[8] are obviously not studied. Some libraries are exceptional - like that of the Austin Hermits at York at the end of the fourteenth century and offer some puzzles in the reason for their acquisition. All such catalogues must as part of the methodology be placed in the context, so far as is possible, of the milieu in which they exist. It is necessary to decide whether the curriculum of the universities at that period prescribed the same texts, whether the personal libraries of contemporaries showed the same tastes, and whether the books contained in them covered contemporary thought in whole or only in part.

This is true whenever one is faced with a library of a closed clientele or even of a public collection at whatever date. The library of the Sorbonne in 1338[9] or the printed catalogue of the Bodleian Library in 1674 or the library of a Literary and Philosophical Society as at Birmingham in 1795[10] must be considered in the light of such factors as those mentioned above. The library of the Mechanics Institute in the earlier nineteenth century[11] may be taken as an example. It is evident that they owed their initiative not to the mechanics and artisans themselves but to that of a number of liberal minded men like George Birkbeck, Joseph Robertson and Thomas Hodgskin. It should be noted that as a result the libraries illustrated the influence of the middle classes - perhaps particularly as theology and politics were



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from the subjects covered. The list of books considered appropriate for a Mechanics' Institute Library numbered some 500 titles. There were 33 works of philosophy, metaphysics and law including Greek and Latin classics in translation. "History (60 titles) contains understandably a higher proportion of more modern work ... and some volumes of criminal trials, books on costume and simple histories of England". There were 40 items of voyages and travels mostly of the eighteenth century. There was also a section on biography, political economy, fine arts and useful arts. Fiction was included with Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Maria Edgeworth, Mrs. Inchbald, 'The Vicar of Wakefield' and 'Robinson Crusoe'. In addition to books of this kind were the many gifts of well-wishers, often of little value or interest. Not only were the origins of the Mechanics' Institute middle-class, but it would seem that although in the early years they were enthusiastically supported by mechanics they soon became used more by the middle classes. It is worthy of note for example that the Bronte sisters borrowed volumes from the 2,000 or so items in the Keighley Mechanics' Institute(12).

It is recorded that in 1850 'there were 610 institutions of Mechanics' Institute type in England, 12 in Wales, 55 in Scotland and 25 in Ireland - a grand total of 702. Their libraries possessed a total of 815,000 volumes and had an annual issue of rather more than two million'(13). Unfortunately with only a few exceptions we know little of who borrowed these volumes and which books were used. As a result it is difficult to estimate their impact on society although there can be no doubt that before the foundation of Public Libraries these libraries were of immense importance to a wide group of people.

At this period also the circulating libraries were very popular and provided an interesting variety of works for home

reading[14]. They were not only collections of fiction, although several descriptions of them suggest that they were the meeting place of the upper classes with time on their hands and little taste. A list made by Jeannette Marshall, the eldest child of Professor John Marshall, a successful surgeon and Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy, of the books she read during the years 1872-1895 is very revealing since she seems to have made use only of Mudie's Circulating Library. In the earlier years she read a book each week; these included the works of Thackeray, Wordsworth, Hannah More, Carlyle, Longfellow and Mrs. Henry Wood. Some French works and a German title occur in her first list for 1872. Later we find George Eliot, Dickens, Morris, Kingsley, Jane Austen, George Sand, Balzac, Mme. de Stael and the German works of Auerbach[15].

Other classes were provided for during the first half of the century. Miners had a number of libraries[16] and there had been for many years collections in parishes usually for the use of the clergy but sometimes for the parishioners as well[17].

In some accounts of circulating libraries we hear of the servants of the usual subscribers to circulating libraries calling to change books for their own use, but we cannot now tell what these were[18]. Charlotte M.Yonge in a letter says that 'For reading for young servants no book was ever quite equal to the Conversations with Cousin Rachel ... Then there is a little book called Girls published by Hatchard ... As to fiction servant girls in their teens seem ready for anything, and the less it is about servants the better they like it'[19]. Some large houses provided libraries for the servants[20]. What is surprising is that servants apparently had the ability and indeed the time to read.

Let us now look at what should be a more direct connexion



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between the book and the reader, i.e. the personal library. There are three forms which these may take. The first is easy as it is a list made by the owner or his executors of an individual's collection. The second is a list which can be compiled often after diligent search of the books which have survived from a library and which can be identified by ex-libris labels, manuscript notes, armorial bindings etc. The third which is necessary for earlier periods is the reconstruction of a writer's library from references in his writings.

The first in general presents few problems. It is necessary to identify the owner, that is not only to know his name but to discover details of his life, especially the date of his death, the level of society in which he lived. Was he a lawyer, a medical man or a theologian, and did his books reflect these interests only? Another problem is the list of books given to an institution which is recorded in a borrowers' register as this may have been reconstructed some years after the date of the gift and it is necessary to compare existing books - if the institution itself still survives - with these lists. There must be a number of contemporary records of private libraries to compare them with one another and to assess their importance for interpreting the ideas of society at that time. I have attempted to do this for the fourteenth century[21] and Sears Jayne has studied the English Renaissance libraries[22]. It is of interest also to note a comparison between the books collected by two polymaths in the early years of the eighteenth century, John Locke and Isaac Newton. Locke had 2197 titles and Newton 1752, of which they held 338 titles in common. These represent an overlap in books on Socinian theology, on chronology, on economics and on philosophy. The two men also held some of the same reference books ... the really remarkable resemblance, or


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in this case, near identity, is travel literature'[23]. How far in fact is this typical of the intellectual interests of the day?

The second category of private libraries i.e. those which can only be reconstructed from surviving books; these constitute a problem of course only when they have been completely dispersed. One example is that of the poet John Donne of whose personal collection more than 60 manuscripts and printed items were identified by Geoffrey Keynes[24] and a number of others have been added to the list since. Unfortunately many great writers like Shakespeare have left no trace of the books they possessed. Attempts have been made to build up a picture of the kind of book he might have owned, based on the works he used for his plays; this leads us to the third type of personal library.

There are many pitfalls in ascribing books which might have been used by an author to a definitive list. Citations from other authors in his writings cannot be assumed to imply that he knew the works of the author. As R.M.Ogilvie[25] says in his introduction to his reconstruction of Lactantius' library: 'My aim is to look in detail at his (i.e. Lactantius') methods and techniques in the hope that the first-hand quotations can be separated from the second-hand borrowings, borrowings from other writers, compendia, anthologies and the like. Certainty is obviously impossible but I trust that at the end of the enquiry a much clearer picture will have emerged of what was in Lactantius' library. It may be a modest contribution to our understanding of the culture and education of the early fourth century'. At the end he is able to show that Lactantius marks the beginning of the Middle Ages coming as he does when 'the great process of survival had already jettisoned many literary treasures of Athens and Rome to oblivion'[26], or to a temporary grave from which they were exhumed at the Renaissance.

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An attempt was also made to draw up a list of authors known to the earliest English writers[27]. It is unlikely however that the books by the authors mentioned were in fact to be found in England in the seventh and eighth centuries. Professor T.J. Brown[28] points out that of the twenty-odd classical authors quoted 'twelve are poets and six are writers of prose. That the poets are being quoted indirectly from grammatical or other works that have been lost or not yet identified is in many cases a possibility'. It is improbable that Terence, Horace, Martial, Ausonius, Anthologica Latina, Quintilian, Cicero or Aristotle (unless this means Pseudo-Augustine Categoriae decem which was known to Aldhelm) were not available at this time. 'The study of Latin literature, in fact, remained at the fundamental level of the grammarians'[29].

Another method fraught with problems is the attribution of books to a scholar or writer on the basis of notes made by the author. An example is the library of Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln and friend of the Oxford Franciscans, in the first half of the thirteenth century. The late Dr. Hunt[30] was able to give an indication of the books Grosseteste owned from the extant books annotated by him, and others, now lost, which are known to have been at one time in the library of the Franciscan convent at Oxford to which he gave his books. There are some references to books in his letters and a later writer, Thomas Gascoign, a fifteenth century theologian, has left some evidence. There is also a list of books which must have been known to Grosseteste and/or a contemporary Oxford Franciscan, Adam Marsh. The problems lie in assessing the value of the list and also in correctly identifying the handwriting of Grosseteste at a period when scholars' hands were very similar. Dr. Hunt was probably the one person to be able to undertake the last task with validity.



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Such a method cannot, however, be adopted lightly.

A further related method is the recognition of schools of illumination - not only of the most highly prized manuscripts but also of those of a lower level of production. A study of manuscripts of this kind, using in addition to art history the whole archaeology of surviving volumes, can identify books which at a particular period were to be found in a certain library - whether private or individual[31]. When we have all the evidence that survives of an individual's library we can only in certain cases be sure that he read the books. The books of Robert Grosseteste, for example, bear testimony from his marginal notes that they were used. The same might be said of such collectors as Petrarch and Boccaccio. Many other personal libraries, however, were built up with other aims in mind. Ausonius reproaches those who buy for show and for the physical satisfaction of a book:

'Emptis quod libris tibi Bibliotheca referta est,
Doctus et grammaticus te, Philomuse, putas'[32].

Most of those mentioned as great collectors were bibliophiles - usually rich - who sought out rare and beautiful manuscripts for their aesthetic appeal as objects rather than for their content. The book collections which were acquired for use were rarely bibliophilic, but rather evidently working libraries like those of John Locke and of many scholars. All too often 'gentlemen's libraries' contained well-bound copies of classic works which were never opened. They therefore reflect only the general taste of the age and not the interests of any one person.

An important source of information on an earlier library is the account given by a visitor, who may have seen a collection which has since disappeared or has greatly changed from that time. The value to be placed on the descriptions which have survived depends very much on the purpose of the visit. One of



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the more interesting accounts for the history of British libraries is that given by John Leland at the period of the dissolution of the monasteries. We must, in assessing the validity of his lists of books to be found in the monasteries and religious houses he toured, remember that he was mainly concerned with the works of British authors[34]. The same problem exists in the manuscripts mentioned by John Bale in his Index of British and other writers[35]. The intentions of Montfaucon in his visits to libraries in Italy were also specialised in that he was looking for classical manuscripts[36]. More general descriptions are to be found in the De bibliothecis liber singularis of Lomeier, in which he gives a useful account of libraries in Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century, taken from a number of sources[37]. A more recent example is the information given by Lord Curzon on the libraries he visited in the Middle East before their contents had been dispersed[38].

The books recommended for study in universities, schools and by the general reader often had a fundamental influence on the society of the time. When we remember that for two hundred and fifty years the two major textbooks of the middle ages were the Bible and the Sentences of Peter Lombard we can appreciate the effect this had not only on generations of scholars but on life in general. The books to be read in medieval universities for the old trivium and quadrivium can be seen to affect both art and literature[39].

Even before the founding of universities Alexander Neckam listed the more important books for scholars[40]. It gives us an insight into the works which were most commonly used towards the end of the twelfth century in Paris.

There are many other similar lists from which we can trace the intellectual interests from one period to another[41]. One of the later examples is that compiled probably by Thomas Barlow,

Bishop of Lincoln, who was Bodley's librarian from 1642-60[42]. The lists were intended 'for the Younger, and poorer sort of Students', and thus contained only the bare essentials of a scholar's library although the number of titles cited is large. A considerable portion of his work is devoted to theological material, but he begins with 'Books of Histoire, Chronologie &c with Authors in all the Arts, & Liberall Sciences, with Criticks, & Antiquaries &c'[43]. As the editor points out 'The lists supply us with much information about the books then used and esteemed in academic and scholarly circles during the first half of the seventeenth century in England, and they constitute a valuable aid to understanding the intellectual training and outlook accorded university students and other scholars at that time'[44].

At the end of the nineteenth century Sir John Lubbock prepared his list of the one hundred most important books[45] and Lord Acton undertook a similar task for 'the English youth whose education is finished, who knows common things, and is not training for a profession' (an indication of a former way of life). He hoped that the works he quoted would 'perfect his mind and open windows in every direction, to raise him to the level of his age so that he may know the (twenty or thirty) forces that have made our world what it is, and still reign over it'[46]. It is a very personal list and his explanations for choosing some titles are often enigmatic. A better attempt was made in the exhibition 'Printing and the Mind of Man'[47] which was not however intended as recommendations for modern readers.

One of the most likely sources for assessing the actual reading habits of a society at any particular period is the list of books which were borrowed. Obviously, and this is one of the problems, the fact of a book being borrowed, like the possession

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of a book does not necessarily imply that it was read, but if someone regularly takes the trouble to visit a library to change a title it must presuppose that he does that in order to read. However, he could belong to a library or reading society for purposes other than reading books. It is perhaps, significant that the painting by Eckstein in 1792 of the Birmingham Book Club shows pipes, glasses and a tankard but no books. As the Club was known as the Jacobin Club it seems likely that anti-Tory discussion was more sought after than the books themselves.

The records of books borrowed are not very numerous and I refer to three in the middle ages, the Vatican in the late Renaissance period and a late eighteenth century Library Society. The problems and interests which arise are common to them all, i.e. what books were read and who read them. The first is probably a list of the items allocated to the Benedictine monks of Thorney Abbey between 1321 and 1330[48]. They were probably taken from a rather limited collection of books - the *libri communes* - as the same works recur each year. The volumes therefore represent the kind of book which would be appropriate for a monk to keep for reading during the year - works of the Fathers, some more modern writers (Bernard, Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Cantor and Peter of Blois), the *Decreta* and the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates.

In a list of the 'Assignationes librorum' of the Dominican Convent at Barcelona between about 1250 and 1500[49] the entries give a clear indication that the friars received only service books or books for study and each friar had only two or three items. This is in accordance with the view of one of their teachers, Humbert of Romans, who said that if a friar had only a few books he would read them but if he had many he would not[50].

The last medieval document to which I refer is also for a restricted community. The lists of philosophical books borrowed



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in 1372, 1373, c.1410 and 1452 by the members of Merton College, Oxford[51] suggest that the borrowers were senior fellows who had taken their Master's degree. It is clear that many of the items lent were books which would be needed also by bachelors or by teachers for their courses. These senior fellows were, it seems, borrowing the texts which they were then using for teaching and one supposes that they could not afford to buy copies for themselves. There is nothing in the collection which is extraneous to the curriculum of the university at the time and in this resembles the libraries brought together by the friars.

One of the more important of surviving registers (in two volumes) is that of the Vatican library from 1475 and from 1481. A full study of all the users, the books they borrowed and the importance of this collection at this period is not attempted here. I would only point out two aspects of the Register which have a bearing on our subject. In the first place we can show that many of the volumes borrowed were for the purpose of publication. Pomponius Laetus borrowed a volume containing Sallust on June 17 1475 for his edition of 1490[53], Christophorus Persona translated and issued three Greek texts he had from the Vatican - Origen Contra Celsum[54], Procopius De bello gotico[55] and Agathias Historiarum Libri[56]; Sulpizio da Veroli edited the De re militari, book I of Vegetius and the Strategematicon of Frontinus[57] from the manuscript he borrowed; Carolus Valgulius of Brescia, secretary of Caesare Borgia, borrowed the Disputationes of Arrian on 24 June 1494 and published his translation at Brescia before 1508[58], and also used the Greek text of Plutarch which was lent to him on 10 February 1495 for his translations which were printed - De virtute morum (Brescia 1497), Praecepta Connubialia (Brescia 1497), De musica (Brescia 1507) and De placitis philosophorum (Paris 1514)[59]. An almost immediate result from a loan was



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that to Michael de Ferno, a cleric of Milan, of the Historia of Orosio di Montone del Campano on 11 February 1495, whose edition was printed on October 31 1495[60]. Raphael Volaterranus edited Procopius De bello Vandalico from the Vatican manuscript he borrowed on 11 August 1504, published at Volterra in 1509[61]. Other examples include the use by Giano Vitale of the manuscript of Xenophon De factis and 'dictis Socratis' translated by Bessarion for his Rome edition of 1521, having borrowed it on 16 June the same year.[62]. Alexander de' Pazzi translated the Ars Poetica of Aristotle, borrowed from the Vatican 21 January 1529, which was printed at Basle 1537[63]. Finally, the edition by Camillo Peruschi, bishop of Alatri, of Aelianus De varia historia appeared in Rome in 1545 from a volume borrowed from the Vatican library[64].

To this record of the influence of a library on the dissemination of texts in this exciting period of intellectual activity may be added a few other examples of its use by those who were members of the Papal household. It is odd, for example, that the printer Arnaldus Pannartz borrowed a copy of Josephus Antiquitates Judaicae on 20th December 1475 when he had printed it at Rome on 25th November 1475[65]. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be able to assess the immediate impact on society of a book borrowed by an individual reader. However the record of loans can throw light on the interests of scholars of the time. Two medical men, Bernardo Leontini of Lorenco, and Niccolò Giudoco of Venice, each borrowed Aetius in Greek, the former with Galen and the latter with Hippocrates, both also in Greek.[66]. Guarrinus Favorinus borrowed Books I-VIII of Dioscorides' De materia medica probably to make a copy of it for Lorenzo de' Medici[67]. The Spanish renaissance philosopher, Fernando de Cordoba, borrowed Aegidius Romanus De potestate papae[68]. The German humanists, Laurenti-



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Behaim of Nuremburg and Johann Tolhopf of Kemnoth, canon of Ratisbon[70], borrowed works from the Vatican library; Behaim had 'Liber geomantie', Aphorismi Zahelis de virtutibus et dignitatibus planetarum and Gerardus and Albumansor in astrologia, whereas Tolhopf, who was an astronomer, found at the Vatican Joachim on Jeremias and Ezechiel[71]. William Latimer, the English humanist and a noted Aristotle scholar borrowed the Moralia of Plutarch and the Ethics of Aristotle in Greek[72], and another Englishman, John Stokesley, bishop of London, took out Plutarch in Greek[73]. Finally the use of an Ethiopic Psalter in 1487 by Giovanni Battista Brocchi da Imola, who had travelled in Ethiopia five years earlier, indicates a knowledge of a language which was unusual at that time[74]. Two final records are of interest. Diego Lopez de Zuniga, who borrowed the De antisciis of Gregorius of Trebizon, was a collaborator in the edition of the Complutensian Bible[75]. Francisco Ximenes of Toledo two volumes of the Greek Old Testament which were used for the preparation of the Polyglot Bible of Alcalá[76].

I have perhaps spent too much time on this material but this borrowers' register is one of the most important documents in the history of libraries. At the period of the High Renaissance this outstanding library can be shown to have had a strong influence on the intellectual circles of Italy, especially in Rome.

Most of the evidence for the reading habits during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is derived from catalogues of 'public' (i.e. public in the sense of being available to members of an institution or society) or private libraries and from the book-trade. Documents for the loan of books from these 'public' collections are very sparse. More fortunate in possessing full borrowing registers for the period 1773 to 1857 is the Bristol Library Society. They are particularly noteworthy for the fact that the poets Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge



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both read the literary between 1793 and 1793 and we know the works that interested them. A study has been made of the early years of the Society's history from 1775 to 1784[77]. It cannot be used to give a complete picture of the influence of books on society in general at this period since the clientele represents only members of the middle and upper-middle classes. For the rest we must look elsewhere although regrettably we have no such records of the popular circulating libraries of the day. Light literature was clearly excluded from the shelves and it is clear that the readers were serious, high-minded and conservative members of society. They were not very much concerned perhaps with politics or religion and even medicine was not well-read. During the period under review there were nearly 13,500 borrowings of 900 titles. Half the total was made up of History, Antiquities and Travel, followed by Belles-lettres 3,313 loans, 'Miscellanies' 949, Philosophy 844, Natural History and Chemistry 814, Theology and Ecclesiastical History 606, and Jurisprudence 477.

The most popular works were travel and history with Sterne and Fielding high in the list. Even in the Belles-Lettres section books about authors were often more sought after than their works. The records, although excellent for offering us some basis for the assessing of public taste at this time, can only give us one aspect of the interests of society as a whole, but there can be little doubt that membership of such Societies meant that like-minded men and women were able to read books and discuss the ideas they disseminated. This must have helped to maintain a stable society at a time when revolutionary cries could almost be heard from across the English Channel.

It may well be objected that I have been too selective in my choice of examples. Doubtless it could be claimed that I have excluded many types of library which have exerted a considerable influence on society at various times. I have

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omitted such great institutions as the London Library (partly because its importance is later in the nineteenth century) and have made no mention of the large number of school libraries and small public libraries which existed(78). At the same time I hope that these examples will be sufficient in the narrow scope of this paper to illustrate the methods used in research in library history in order to answer the questions I posed at the beginning, i.e. what books were where at any particular period, who had access to them and what evidence is there for their use? The interpretation of their influence on society in general or, more usually, on a particular section of society is only possible when a large amount of detailed information can be collected. As I have said earlier, the availability of a book and even a record of its loan do not provide a clear testimony that it was read and that its use had any benefit (or otherwise) for society. We must therefore at all times hesitate to draw firm conclusions from what is so often meagre evidence.



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NOTES.

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15. Oldman, C., etc., op.cit., p.53.

16. Osbest, G.L. Mudie's circulating library and the Victorian novel. Newton Abbot, 1970, p.21 notes that Mudie took 3,250 copies of Livingstone's Travels in 1857 and two years later 1,000 copies of Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

17. I am indebted to Mrs. Caroline Miles, Jeannette Marshall's granddaughter, for permission to quote from the Diaries. I am indebted to Lady Shonfield for making her copies available and for other references in this paper.

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67. op.cit., p.5, n.7.

68. op.cit., p.46, n.5 and p.55, n.5. Niccolò Guidecco was a member of the Accademia Aldina.

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. op.cit., p.38. Behaim was a friend of Reuchlin and Pirckheimer. He was a page in the service of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia.

. op.cit., p.55. Volhopf was a friend of Conrade Celtis, professor in the universities of Ingolstadt and Leipzig.

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